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# The Shakespeare Question Course

BY

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*Instructor in English  
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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY*

This course is prepared to help  
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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

These questions were prepared for the purpose of assisting the general reader to a better understanding of the plays of Shakespeare.

They are intended to suggest the salient points which should be noted by those who are reading for pleasure.

They do not require intimate knowledge of notes, historical references, or of play making.

They may be answered by any thoughtful reader.

Read the introduction by Mr. Arthur Brisbane, which contains material and suggestions that will greatly aid you in appreciating the plays and poems.

F. S. L.



# The Shakespeare Question Course

## The Tempest

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Where is the scene of this drama placed?
2. Can you give a reason why Shakespeare begins this play with a storm?
3. Scene 2. What do you learn about Ferdinand?
4. What expression of the Realistic, the Romantic, and the Supernatural does Shakespeare give in this act?

### ACT II

5. Scene 1. What description of the island does Gonzalo give?
6. Scene 1. What does Ariel do for Gonzalo?
7. Scene 2. What is the dramatic purpose of this humorous scene?

### ACT III

8. Scene 1. What task does Prospero impose upon Ferdinand?

9. Compare the love scene of Miranda and Ferdinand with that of Romeo and Juliet; in what are they alike; how do they differ?

### ACT IV

10. Give as good a description as you can of Caliban.
11. How does the action of the play progress in this act?

### ACT V

12. How does the author bring Prospero to release his prisoners?
13. What do you think of Prospero?
14. How does he present Ferdinand to his father again?

### GENERAL

15. What do you think of The Tempest?
16. Why is it not a good play to be acted?
17. What do you learn from the epilogue?

## The Two Gentlemen of Verona

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. What does Shakespeare tell about the characters Proteus and Valentine? lines 63-68.
2. Is this scene humorous? Why?
3. Scene 2. Compare the first 50 lines of this scene with The Merchant of Venice, Act I, Scene 2, lines 37-140.
4. What are your conclusions?
5. Scene 3. Why is this an important scene?

### ACT II

6. Scene 1. What shows you that Valentine's love for Silvia is genuine?
7. Scene 2. What is the reason for giving this short scene?
8. Scene 3. What kind of humor is found in this scene?
9. Do you enjoy it?
10. Scene 4. How does Thurio reveal his character? lines 10-42.
11. Scene 5. Would comedy of this kind interest a modern audience?

ACT III

12. Which is the more interesting, Valentine or Proteus?

ACT IV

13. Scene 1. How does Shakespeare make Valentine's willingness to become an outlaw less objectionable? lines 71-76.  
 14. Summarize the methods Shakespeare has used to complicate the story.  
 15. What feelings are aroused by lines 68-112?

ACT V

16. Does Proteus deserve the reward he receives?  
 17. Will Julia be happy with Proteus?

GENERAL

18. Do you like the way in which Shakespeare ends the play?  
 19. Are there any scenes or characters which seem unnatural?  
 20. Do you like the story? Why?

**The Merry Wives of Windsor**

ACT I

1. Scene 1. Describe the characters in this scene basing your descriptions upon what they say.  
 2. Scene 3. What is the spirit of this scene?

ACT II

3. What parts of the three scenes of this act advance the main story of the play?  
 4. What parts are given merely to amuse?

ACT III

5. Scene 1. Do you enjoy the humor of Slender's asides?  
 6. Scene 3. Are you interested in the plan of Mistress Page and Mistress Ford?  
 7. Scene 4. How does Slender act in this scene?

8. What do you think of his wooing?

9. Scene 5. Does this scene appeal to you as funny? Why?

ACT IV

10. Scene 1. How would this scene have to be played in order to show the fun in it?  
 11. Scenes 4 and 6. Which of the two plans for Anne's marriage do you want to succeed? Why?

ACT V

12. Scene 5. How is the comedy finally concluded?

GENERAL

13. Are you more interested in the story of Falstaff or in the story of Anne and Fenton? Why?

**Measure for Measure**

ACT I

1. How are you informed of the conditions in the city which need to be changed?

ACT IV

4. How does Shakespeare try to make Mariana's assent to the Duke's plan seem less repulsive?

ACT II

2. Scene 2. Should Angelo have been moved to clemency by Isabella's arguments?

ACT V

5. What are your criticisms of the final disposition of the chief characters?

ACT III

3. Does this act suggest that the Duke understood Angelo's real character?

GENERAL

6. How does this play show the differences between the ethics of Shakespeare's time and modern times?

## The Comedy of Errors

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Are you interested by *Ægeon's* story?
2. What are the important points in it?
3. Scene 2. What does Antipholus of Syracuse think of the message he receives from the mistaken Dromio?

### ACT II

4. Scene 1. What kind of woman is Adriana?
5. How does Shakespeare make the mistakes seem natural to Antipholus of Syracuse and his Dromio? (lines 184 ff.)

### ACT III

6. Scene 1. Has Antipholus of Ephesus any excuse for making the announcement found in lines 107-121?
7. Do you attach any importance to the proposed gift of the chain? lines 117-119.
8. Scene 2. Contrast Luciana with her sister.

9. Why is the idea in line 161 repeated?

### ACT IV

10. What is the first incident which shows Shakespeare is getting ready for the explanations which come in Act V?
11. Was Adriana justified in thinking her husband had gone mad?

### ACT V

12. Has Adriana deserved the rebuke of the Abbess? (lines 68 ff.)
13. Do the events of this act follow in natural sequence?

### GENERAL

14. What type of play is this?
15. Do the characters develop as the play progresses or do they remain as they were at the opening of the play?
16. Keeping the explanation of Antipholus of Syracuse in mind, does the play seem plausible?
17. Did you enjoy the fun in this play?

## Much Ado About Nothing

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Who are the interesting characters in this scene?
2. In what attitudes toward each other are Beatrice and Benedick shown in the opening scene and to what are those attitudes due?

### ACT II

3. Scene 3. What is the purpose of the stratagem practiced upon Beatrice and Benedick?
4. What is the cause of Don John's perfidy to Claudio?

### ACT IV

5. Scene 1. How would a modern audience respond to a man's mortifying an innocent woman as Claudio did Hero at the altar?

### ACT V

6. Scene 3. What do you think of the church scene and Claudio's poem and song?
7. Scene 4. Comment upon Claudio's willingness to marry a masked woman.

### GENERAL

8. Where is the crisis in this play?
9. Who are the principal characters?
10. Comment on the art with which Shakespeare has raised Benedick and Beatrice to the height required for a mutual avowal of love after all that has passed between them.

## Love's Labour's Lost

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. What are the terms of the oath referred to in this scene?
2. Scene 2. Compare the kinds of humorous effect furnished by Moth, Costard, and Armando.

### ACT II

3. Scene 1. How far has the oath been kept, when this scene closes?

### ACT III

4. Scene 1. What two errands are entrusted to Costard? Has he wit enough to keep them straight?

### ACT IV

5. Scene 1. What is there about the letter that is characteristic of Armando?

6. What mood are the ladies in?
7. Scene 2. What is the character of Holofernes?
8. Scene 3. Who are the "Four woodcocks in a dish", and why are they called so?
9. By what line of reasoning does Biron justify the breaking of their oath?

### ACT V

10. Scene 1. What is the nature of the humor of this scene?
11. Scene 2. Describe the trick the ladies play on the lovers.
12. How do the "Four Worthies" take the way their efforts are received?
13. What is "Love's labor" in the play, and how is it "lost"?

## A Midsummer-Night's Dream

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Explain the relations between the four lovers.
2. Just why does each of the lovers go to the forest?
3. Scene 2. Are these characters to be thought of as Athenians? If not, do they belong in this play?
4. What sort of person is Bottom?

### ACT II

5. Scene 1. Do these fairies make you think of Greece, or some other country?
6. What are some of the lines that are most fairy-like?
7. Are they represented with petty minds as well as tiny forms?
8. What is the power of the magic plant, and how does Oberon mean to have it used?
9. Scene 2. How seriously are we to take this scene?
10. In this and other scenes, how does Puck feel about his mistakes?

### ACT III

11. Scene 1. Do the characters in this scene know that they are funny?
12. Show how Titania's fairy daintiness affects the humor of the closing part of the scene.

13. Scene 2. Explain the confusion of the lovers here; how is it to be straightened out?

### ACT IV

14. Scene 1. How far is Bottom turned into an ass, and how far does he remain his natural self?
15. Is the hunting party a good addition to the play?
16. When Bottom wakes, how much does he remember?

### ACT V

17. Scene 1. Is Quince's prologue nonsense because of the way it was written, or of the way he recites it, or both?
18. What absurdities of stage-management occur in the mechanics' play?
19. Which of the actors makes the funniest blunders in language, and what trait of his character leads him to make them?
20. Do the comments of the spectators have any effect on the actors?

### GENERAL

21. What popular beliefs are connected with Midsummer Night?
22. Whose dream is meant—Titania's, Bottom's, the lovers', or the reader's?

## The Merchant of Venice

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. What does this scene show of the character, circumstances, and friends of Antonio?
2. What lines of story-interest are suggested in the last few speeches?
3. Scene 2. What natural, girlish things does Portia say?
4. Has anything been mentioned in the play so far that is not perfectly credible?
5. Scene 3. What lines, scattered through this scene, make you suspicious of Shylock's apparent generosity?

### ACT II

6. Scene 2. What action or "stage business" would take place in this scene?
7. Scenes 3-6. What are the reasons for thinking that Shakespeare expects us to sympathize with Jessica in her elopement?
8. Scene 7. Does the Prince of Morocco choose as you would have expected, from his character as shown in Scene 1?
9. Scene 9. At the end of the second act, how far have the love-story and the bond-story developed, and what should we expect to happen next in each?

### ACT III

10. Scene 1. Balance the best things Shylock says in this scene with

the worst, and decide whether in the main we are expected to sympathize with him.

11. Does the elopement of Jessica have any effect on the main story?
12. Scene 2. Is this scene more or less interesting from the fact that we have seen Morocco and Arragon choose?
13. What qualities does Portia show, in the various parts of this scene?
14. Scene 3. What is Portia's plan, and in what spirit does she undertake it?

### ACT IV

15. Scene 1. Just how far has the trial got, when Portia enters?
16. Why does Shakespeare have Portia prolong Antonio's agony by letting Shylock go so far towards cutting the pound of flesh?
17. Are we expected to take sides in this scene for or against Shylock?
18. Would you be willing to have the play end with Shylock's exit, line 412?

### ACT V

19. Scene 1. What is the tone of the first 100 lines of this scene, as compared with Act IV?
20. In what mood is the audience expected to go away?

## As You Like It

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Why do people find Orlando attractive?
2. Scene 2. Are you interested in Rosalind and Celia?
3. What points in Rosalind's character are brought out in Scene 3?

### ACT II

4. What purpose does Scene 1 serve?
5. Why is the last part of this act (beginning with Scene 4) so broken up?

6. Scene 5. What are your first impressions of Jaques?
7. Practically everybody knows one of the speeches in Scene 7. Find it.
8. Why does it make such an impression?

### ACT III

9. Pick out the things you particularly like in Scene 2.
10. Do you think it reasonable that Orlando should not recognize Rosalind?

## The Taming of the Shrew

## INDUCTION

1. Describe Christopher Sly.
2. Outline the induction.
3. In what frame of mind would this induction put an audience?

## ACT I

4. What part of the story is told in Scene 1?
5. Why has Petruchio come to Padua?
6. How does he receive Hortensio's suggestion about Katharina?

## ACT II

7. Scene 1. Describe the comedy elements in this scene.
8. What effect would the first meeting of Petruchio and Kate produce on the stage?
9. What does Baptista say concerning his daughter Bianca's suitors?

## GENERAL

23. What makes this one of the most popular of Shakespeare's plays?
24. What scenes do you like best?
25. What speeches do you like best?
26. What speeches are worth memorizing?

### ACT III

10. Scene 1. Describe the Latin lesson and the waiting music teacher.
11. Scene 2. How must Kate have felt when her fiancé arrived for the wedding?
12. How did Kate accept her first "taming"?

## ACT IV

13. How is the love-story of Bianca progressing?
14. What part does the pedant play?

## ACT V

15. How does the story progress?
16. Was the use of disguised identities a favorite device of Shakespeare? Where has he used it in this play?

## GENERAL

17. What is the strength of this play?
18. What is its weakness? Is the interest maintained throughout?

## All's Well That Ends Well

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Define the sorrow which Helena says she *affects* and that which she says she *has*.
2. Scene 3. Is the clown an "idiot", silly by nature", or an "artificial" clown?
3. Is the Countess sincere in what she says to Helena?

### ACT II

4. Scene 3. Does Bertram appear in a favorable light in this scene? Why?
5. How would Helena act during lines 109-155?
6. In what respect is Helena arrogant?

### ACT III

7. Scene 4. What is your attitude toward Helena's action?
8. Scene 5. Is your interest in the story any greater? Why?

### ACT IV

9. Scene 2. Can you explain lines 20-31?

10. Scene 3. What dramatic purpose is served by this examination of Parolles?

### ACT V

11. Scene 3. What does Bertram do that makes him seem even more unworthy?
12. Tell the whole story of the two rings. Is your opinion of Helena affected by the fact that she does the wooing?

### GENERAL

13. One Shakesperian scholar says the heroine of this play is Shakespeare's "loveliest creation." Do you agree? Why?
14. Does Helena enlist your sympathies? Why?
15. Has Bertram redeeming qualities?
16. What is the central theme of this play?

## Twelfth Night; or, What You Will

### ACT I

1. What dramatic purpose does Shakespeare effect in the opening lines of the play?
2. In scene one, what information is given concerning the Duke? Concerning Olivia?
3. Why did Olivia take service under the Duke?
4. What revelation of himself does Sir Toby make in Scene 3?
5. Does Sir Andrew fit the description given by Sir Toby and Maria?
6. Does Scene 3 introduce a new element into the play?
7. Does Viola's position in the opinion of the Duke come as a surprise? (Scene 4.)
8. In the fifth scene does Viola aid the Duke in his wooing?

9. Does this situation remind you of another of Shakespeare's plays in which a woman falls in love with another woman disguised as a man?

### ACT II

10. Scene 1. Why does Sebastian mention his resemblance to Viola?
11. What is the purpose of Scene 3?
12. In Scene 4 what dramatic purpose does the clown's comment on the Duke's changeableness serve?
13. Do you enjoy the fifth scene? Why?
14. What mental quality does Malvolio lack?

### ACT III

15. Was Olivia unmaidenly in declaring her love for Viola?

16. Are you less interested in her because she did?
17. Is your interest further aroused by Scene 2?
18. Does the episode of the duel appeal to you as humorous?
19. To whom is Viola talking just after Antonio's exit in Scene 4?

## ACT IV

20. How is the plot further complicated by Scene 1?
21. Why does Olivia invite Sebastian to her house?
22. Do you find the second scene humorous? Why?

## ACT V

23. What character clears up the action of the play?
24. How does Olivia act when she learns she has married an utter stranger?

25. What do you think of her at this point?
26. Does the sudden transfer of the Duke's affections to Viola seem natural?
27. What becomes of the other characters—especially Malvolio, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew?

## GENERAL

28. Does the confusion of identity remind you of another of Shakespeare's plays?
29. Is the Duke's character presented consistently throughout the play?
30. Does the clown serve any other purpose than that of creating humor?
31. Did you enjoy the reading? Why?

## The Winter's Tale

## ACT I

1. Scene 2. Did Leontes have any cause for jealousy here?
2. What does he order Camillo to do?
3. Does he execute the order?

## ACT II

4. Scene 1. What do the lords and ladies think of the queen?
5. Does she act as a guilty woman would be expected to act?
6. What does Leontes expect to learn from the Oracle?
7. Scene 3. Is Leontes becoming more suspicious?

## ACT III

8. Scene 2. How does the Oracle affect Leontes?
9. What misfortunes follow?
10. What is the king's attitude?
11. What is the meaning of the name Perdita?

## ACT IV

12. Scene 4. In what ways is Perdita made superior to her surroundings?
13. Do you like the love story of this act? Why?

## ACT V

14. Scene 1. Sixteen years have passed. Has the character of Leontes changed?
15. Scene 3. Do you think Hermione should have forgiven Leontes so readily?
16. Do you like this act? Why?

## GENERAL

17. Which character is made most important in this play?
18. On what incident is the action of the whole play based?
19. Compare Perdita with Miranda in *The Tempest*.

## The Life and Death of King John

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. What message comes from France?
2. What quality does the reader admire in Philip?
3. Can you account for Philip's wish to be known as the illegitimate son of Richard Coeur-de-Lion?

### ACT II

4. Scene 1. Does this situation seem natural; the discussion between Ellinor and Constance while all the men are waiting?
5. How do you account for both the French and the English claiming the victory of Angiers? lines 300-312.
6. How is the question finally settled?
7. What are the principal thoughts in the bastard's soliloquy?

### ACT III

8. Scene 1. What are your feelings toward Constance?

9. What are her predominating characteristics?

10. Does King Philip succeed in pacifying her?

11. Why does the bastard keep reiterating, "And hang a calf's-skin on his recreant limbs" to Austria?

12. Scene 3. What do you think of John's instructions to Hubert regarding the death of young Arthur?

13. Scene 4. Is this a good picture of maternal agony?

### ACT IV

14. Scene 1. Would such a scene as this find place in a modern play? Why?

### ACT V

15. Scene 6. Was the cause of John's death a surprise?

### GENERAL

16. Point out the reasons for saying that the imprisonment of Arthur was the turning point in John's fortunes.

## The Tragedy of King Richard II

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Which character interests you the most?
2. Why?
3. What important information is given the reader in Scene 4? (See lines 23-36.)

### ACT II

4. Scene 1. What do you think of the king's attitude toward the dying John of Gaunt?
5. What will come of Richard's action in seizing the property of John of Gaunt?
6. Where in Act. II is the first suggestion of coming trouble?
7. Are you attracted to Bolingbroke in this act?
8. Why?

### ACT III

9. Scene 1. When Richard receives the news brought by Salisbury and by Scroop does he act as you would expect him to?

10. Does he act in a kingly manner in Scene 3?

### ACT IV

11. Do you find this act interesting?

12. Are your sympathies with Richard or with Bolingbroke?

13. Why?

### ACT V

14. Scene 5. What is your opinion of Richard's soliloquy?

15. Does Bolingbroke deal justly with Exton?

### GENERAL

16. Compare the two characters, Richard and Bolingbroke.

17. Which deserved the kingdom?

## The First Part of King Henry IV

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. What was Henry preparing to do when news was brought of the fighting in Wales and also in the North?
2. What comparison does the King make between Hotspur and his own son?
3. Scene 2. How do you account for the fact that an audience of Shakespeare's day would sit through a scene like this and a modern audience would not? Is it interesting to you?
4. Scene 3. Comment upon Shakespeare's power of description after reading this speech of Hotspur's—lines 30-70. To whom does Hotspur probably refer?
5. Why did the King refuse to ransom Mortimer?

### ACT II

6. What are the important points in this act?

7. Scene 2. How does Shakespeare bring Prince Henry into a favorable light?

### ACT IV

8. Scene 3. How does Hotspur justify himself and his comrades for this war?

### ACT V

9. Scene 2. Why was Hotspur not informed of the King's offer?
10. Scene 4. Why was Hotspur's death necessary for the action of the play?
11. Scene 5. What generous act does Prince Harry perform?
12. Is this sudden conversion of Prince Henry a natural transition from boyhood to manhood, or does the author do this to make a spectacular ending for his play?

### GENERAL

13. What criticism would you offer of the play as a whole?
14. Give a critical estimate of the part Falstaff plays in the whole production.

## The Second Part of King Henry IV

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Why does Bardolph give Northumberland false reports of Shrewsbury?
2. What effect does the real news have upon him?
3. Scene 2. Of what value to the play is this scene?

### ACT II

4. Scene 2. How do you account for Prince Henry's being willing to disguise himself to wait upon Falstaff?

### ACT III

5. Scene 1. What effect does being an onlooker instead of a participant in such a revel have upon Prince Harry?

### ACT IV

6. Scene 3. Would a modern audience accept such treachery as John committed?

7. Scene 5. Why does the Prince remove the crown from his father's pillow? What does the King think is the reason?

8. Would a dying man be able to make such a long speech? Was he not jealous of his crown?

### ACT V

9. Scene 2. How do you account for Henry V's retaining his father's chief justice?
10. Scene 5. What happened to Falstaff?

### GENERAL

11. What purpose does the induction serve? The Epilogue?
12. What do you think of the second part of Henry IV as compared with the first part?

## The Life of King Henry V

### ACT I

1. In what way does the first prologue give the keynote of the play?
2. Why are prologues employed in this play?
3. Was Henry ignorant of the details given in this act?
4. Why are they given so fully?
5. Do you like Henry's reply to the French Ambassadors?
6. Why?

### ACT II

7. What is the substance of the prologue?
8. Scene 1. Can you describe the personal appearance of these characters from their conversation?
9. Why were such characters introduced in the play?
10. What does Henry do in this act to compel your respect?
11. What is the dramatic purpose of Scene 4?

### ACT III

12. From what Chorus says in this prologue can you tell what is to happen in this act?
13. Do you like Henry's speeches before Harfleur?

14. Contrast the speeches of the French king with those of Henry.

### ACT IV

15. Note what Chorus tells you in the prologue.
16. Does Henry's talks with his soldiers and his subsequent soliloquy serve any dramatic purpose?
17. Do you think the practical joke Henry plays on Williams would naturally follow the battle?
18. What purpose does it serve?

### ACT V

19. What purpose does this prologue serve?
20. What becomes of the comedy characters?
21. Do you like Henry as a lover? Is there a real reason for giving the epilogue?

### GENERAL

23. In what ways does this play differ from others you have read?
24. To what type of drama does it belong?
25. Are you attracted by the character of Henry?
26. Which prologue do you like best? Why?

## The First Part of King Henry VI

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Can you tell from this scene what the story of this play is to be?
2. Scene 2. What are your impressions of Joan La Pucelle?
3. Scene 3. What do you learn of the characters and ambitions of Winchester and Gloucester?
4. Scene 5. What do you think of Talbot's speeches?

### ACT II

5. Scene 1. Do you think this scene treats English and French impartially?

6. Why?

7. Scenes 4 and 5. What do you think of Warwick?
8. What do you think of Richard Plantagenet?

### ACT III

9. Scene 1. What special speech is prophetic?
10. Is Shakespeare fair to the French in this act?

### ACT IV

11. What are the important events of this act?

## ACT V

12. Are your sympathies aroused by the fate of Joan of Arc?  
 13. Why?  
 GENERAL  
 14. What is Shakespeare's attitude toward Henry VI as developed

in the portrayal of his character throughout the play?  
 Was the policy of the Bishop of Winchester selfish?  
 15. Why did Shakespeare make the Joan of Arc of this play so different from the Joan of Arc of history?  
 16.

## The Second Part of King Henry VI

## ACT I

1. What passages in this act foreshadow events found in Act II?  
 2. Scene 1. Why is the fact that Margaret had no dowry important?  
 3. Scene 2. Do the people know Suffolk is their enemy?

## ACT II

4. Scene 1. The speeches seem to be but light conversation; have they deeper significance?  
 5. Scene 4. Do you pity the Duchess of Gloucester? Why?

## ACT III

6. Scene 1. What are your feelings toward the Queen?  
 7. Toward Gloucester?  
 8. What do you think of the king?

## ACT IV

9. What is the most important episode in this act?  
 10. Why is it important?

## ACT V

11. Scene 1. What do you think of York's first speech?  
 12. Scenes 1 and 2. Are his actions equal to his words?  
 13. Scene 2. Why does Shakespeare have York kill Clifford?

## GENERAL

14. Is this the story of the fortunes of one man or is it more the story of events and men?  
 15. Was Margaret justified in her opinion of her husband?  
 16. Is this second part of Henry VI developed from part one?

## The Third Part of King Henry VI

## ACT I

1. Scene 1. Does King Henry act as you would expect the son of Henry the Fifth to act?  
 2. Scene 2. What do you think of Richard's argument? (lines 22-34.)

## ACT II

3. Scenes 1 and 2. Are your sympathies with Edward, Richard, and Warwick, or with King Henry, Queen Margaret, and Clifford? Why?

4. Scene 5. What is the real nature of King Henry? Is he a coward?

## ACT III

5. Scene 2. What evidence is given in this scene that Edward's character was understood?

## ACT IV

6. Summarize the important events in this act.

## ACT V

7. Scene 4. What is your opinion of Queen Margaret's speech? (lines 1-38.)  
 8. Scene 5. In what respects is Prince Edward different from his father?  
 9. Do you find a suggestion in this scene of the murder of King Henry?

## GENERAL

10. How closely connected are the three parts of the play?  
 11. Have you been interested throughout the three parts? Why?  
 12. Do you think a modern audience would be interested by the play? Why?  
 13. Richard appears in another play. What do you expect?

## The Tragedy of King Richard III

1. Scene 1. What makes this first speech of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, one of the famous speeches of Shakespeare?
2. Scene 4. Are your sympathies aroused by this scene?
3. Why?

### ACT II

4. Scene 2. What is the purpose of scene between the Duchess of York and her grandchildren?
5. Why is the third scene introduced?

### ACT III

6. Scene 4. Is the last speech of Hastings important?
7. Why?

8. Scene 7. What advice does Buckingham offer Richard?

### ACT IV

9. What purpose does Scene 3 serve?

10. Scene 4. What feelings are aroused by this scene?

### ACT V

11. Scene 3. Why are the ghosts introduced in this scene?
12. Could they be used in a modern play?
13. Scene 4. Is the last speech of Richard in keeping with his manner of living?

### GENERAL

14. When is your interest in the outcome of the story first aroused?
15. What causes it?
16. Do Richard's deformities have any bearing upon his actions?
17. Would Richard's motives have been clear enough without his many soliloquies?
18. Why was this play popular in Shakespeare's day?

## The Famous History of the Life of King Henry VIII

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. What do you learn concerning Cardinal Wolsey in this scene?

2. Scene 2. What important happening marks this scene?

3. Scene 4. What is the object of this scene?

### ACT II

4. Scene 1. How does Shakespeare treat Buckingham's case?

5. Why did the Cardinal wish to get rid of Buckingham?

6. Scene 2. What reason does the King give for wanting to divorce Katharine? What was the real cause?

7. Scene 3. What dramatic situation does the author give at the beginning of this scene?

8. Scene 4. Read Katherine's defense carefully and comment upon it; why is it regarded as one of the finest things Shakespeare has done?

9. Scene 4. Lines 134-140. Does this speech of Henry's atone in any manner for his action?

10. Does Henry's speech freeing Cardinal Wolsey from suggesting the divorce, exonerate Wolsey?

### ACT III

11. Scene 2. Describe Wolsey's attitude in regard to Henry's marriage to Anne Bullen.

12. What is the cause of Wolsey's downfall?

13. Why have many memorized this speech? Lines 350-372.

### ACT IV

14. Scene 1. By whom is the queen's coronation described? Give a brief description.

15. Scene 2. Comment upon the death scene of Katharine.

16. How does this act show that wonderful ability of Shakespeare to put scenes in effective order?

### ACT V

17. What is the chief event in this act?

18. What was the reason for the plot against Canterbury?
19. Shakespeare is said to have been an accomplished courtier. How is this shown to be true in scene 5?

## Troilus and Cressida

1. What do you learn from the prologue?

### ACT I

2. Do you get the impression that the characters are Greeks and Trojans? Why?

### ACT II

3. Scene 3. How is the character of Ajax set forth? What is it?
4. Are you interested in the play? Why?

### ACT III

5. Scene 2. By what means does Shakespeare suggest that Cressida's love is not real?
6. Scene 3. Is the nationality of the characters made more evident in this scene? How?

### GENERAL

20. What do you think of this play as compared with Henry IV?
21. Give a description of Henry VIII gained from reading this play.

### ACT IV

7. Scene 4. How has Cressida shown her character in this scene?
8. Scene 5. Was Ulysses justified in saying what he did about Cressida? Why?
9. What important developments does this act show?

### ACT V

10. What does Shakespeare do to enlist your sympathies for Hector?

### GENERAL

11. Has the play good qualities? What are they?
12. Is the end of the play satisfactory? Why?
13. Has Shakespeare made vice attractive?

## Coriolanus

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. Is the reasoning of the first citizen correct?
2. Describe the character of Caius Marius as portrayed in this scene.
3. Does he have the sympathy of the reader?
4. Scene 3. Does this scene which is such a contrast to the former and the succeeding ones throw much light on the play?
5. Why is it introduced?
6. Scene 6. Is Commenius portrayed as a leader of men?
7. Scene 9. Why was Marcius called Coriolanus? lines 61-68.

### ACT II

8. Scene 1. What is there in these two long speeches of Menenius that calls forth praise from many critics? lines 50-110.

### ACT III

9. Scene 2. What do you think of Volumnia's reasoning?

### ACT IV

10. Scene 7. What does this scene between Aufidius and his lieutenant signify?

### ACT V

11. Scene 3. Is the speech of Volumnia in the same strain as her former speeches?
12. Scene 6. Does Coriolanus deserve his tragic end?

### GENERAL

13. What do you think of this play as compared with Julius Caesar?
14. What is the underlying note of the whole play?

**Titus Andronicus****ACT I**

1. What effect has war had upon the character of Titus?

**ACT III**

2. Are there speeches or actions in this act which approach the heroic?

3. Is the madness of Titus real or feigned? Give reasons.

**ACT V**

4. Does Shakespeare intend to show that the innocent as well as the guilty are sacrificed through revenge? Is this generally true in life?

**GENERAL**

5. Many doubt that Shakespeare was the author of this play. Can you assign reasons for their doubt?

**Romeo and Juliet****ACT I**

1. Scene 1. What persons appear, or are mentioned, in the street-brawl scene, that one should remember?

2. What does the concluding line of Benvolio lead us to expect in later scenes?

3. Scene 3. What is your first impression of Romeo? Note whether there is a change when he meets Juliet.

4. What events in the play are prepared for in this scene?

5. Scene 4. What sort of woman is the nurse, and what seems to be her standing in the family?

6. Scene 5. Is Mercutio's speech about the fairies introduced simply for its own wit and poetic charm, or has it some connection with the scene?

7. From this scene and Scene 1, do you take sides with either the Capulets or the Montagues, or remain neutral?

8. At the end of this act, have any elements of possible tragedy appeared?

**ACT II**

9. Scene 2. What does this scene gain in power from the time and place?

10. Scenes 4 and 5. Does the nurse show herself in any new light?

**ACT III**

11. Scene 1. Whose fault was the quarrel?

12. What course might the story have taken if it had not been for this quarrel?

13. Scene 3. Trace the changes in Romeo's emotions during this scene.

14. Scene 4. Compare the treatment that Juliet receives at the hands of her father, her mother, and her nurse.

**ACT IV**

15. Scenes 1 and 3. What is Friar Lawrence's plan, and how fully does Juliet believe in it?

**ACT V**

16. Why did Friar Lawrence's plan fail?

17. Is it dramatically effective to have the scene between Romeo and Paris?

18. Would you have been satisfied if Juliet had revived in time to bring about a happy ending?

19. What is the value of the concluding scene, after Juliet dies?

## Timon, of Athens

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. What does one conclude about the character of Timon in the first scene?
2. Scenes 1 and 2. Why is Apemantus introduced so early in the play?
3. Scene 2. Is there any sign of disaster foretold here?

### ACT II

4. Scenes 2 and 3. Why do these servants of Timon's creditors come to Timon now?
5. Do they show the attitude of their masters in any way?

### ACT III

6. Scene 1. How does Lucullus show that he is a coward?
7. Scene 2. What has Timon done for Lucius? How do you account for Lucius's refusal?
8. Scene 3. What excuse does Sempronius give for not complying with Timon's request?
9. What was the real motive for all these refusals?

10. Scene 5. Why does the Senate banish Alcibiades?
11. Scene 6. What do the lords say to each other before Timon's entrance?
12. What do you think of Timon's second banquet as a stage device?

### ACT IV

13. Scene 1. Had Timon cause to deliver such a speech?
14. Scene 3, line 173. Timon to Alcibiades—"Yes, thou spakest well of me." To what does this refer?
15. What is the difference between Timon and Apemantus?

### ACT V

16. Is Timon insane?
17. What does he say to the Senators?
18. What compromise does Alcibiades make with the city of Athens?

### GENERAL

19. With what other play of Shakespeare would you compare this?

## Julius Caesar

### ACT I

1. Scene 2. Are you attracted to Caesar upon his first entrance? Why?
2. What means does Shakespeare employ to belittle the character of Julius Caesar?
3. What is the purpose of the shouts and flourishes while Brutus and Cassius are talking?

### ACT II

4. Whose judgment is best in regard to Antony, Cassius's or Brutus's?
5. Are there other evidences of Brutus's judgment in this first scene?
6. Do lines 229 to 308 give you further light on Brutus's character?
7. Does Caesar appear to advantage in Scene 2?
8. What is the dramatic purpose of Scene 4?

### ACT III

9. What are the effects of Caesar's speeches up to line 75, Scene 1?
10. Why is the question Cassius addresses to Trebonius significant?
11. Scene 1. Does Antony suggest what he intends to do?
12. Is another case of poor judgment shown in this scene?
13. Scene 2. Can you explain the reason for having Brutus speak in prose and Antony in poetry?
14. What is the dramatic purpose of Scene 3?

### ACT IV

15. Does the first scene change your opinion of Antony?
16. How does the third scene advance the story?
17. What are the causes of the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius and what are the reasons for the reconciliation?

8. Why did Portia kill herself?  
 9. Why did Cassius yield to Brutus in the matter of choosing the battleground on which to meet their enemies?

## ACT V

0. Trace carefully the progress of the battle through this act.  
 1. Is there any point at which the play could end before it does?  
 2. How does Brutus die?

23. What does Antony say of Brutus?  
 24. Is he justified in saying it?  
 GENERAL  
 25. Is that part of the play which precedes the speech of Antony, or that which follows it, the more interesting?  
 26. What are the real causes of Brutus's failure?  
 27. In what respect is Cassius shown to be superior to Brutus?

## Macbeth

## ACT I

1. Scenes 1 and 3. What is the dramatic function of the Weird sisters in this play?  
 2. In how many ways are you interested in Macbeth before he appears?  
 3. What are the first words uttered by Macbeth and what is their dramatic significance?  
 4. Scene 3. What warning does Banquo give Macbeth after Ross has addressed the latter as Thane of Cawdor?  
 5. What does Macbeth tell Lady Macbeth in the letter?  
 6. How does Lady Macbeth describe her husband?  
 7. What revelation does she make of her own character in the two soliloquies in the fifth scene? Is it the same revelation she makes of herself to Macbeth a moment later?  
 8. Scene 6. What is the dramatic purpose of the comments of Duncan and Banquo concerning Macbeth's Castle?  
 9. Scene 7. What are Macbeth's reasons for not killing Duncan? What is his only reason for doing it?  
 10. How does Lady Macbeth urge him on?  
 11. Who is the real and primal cause of the murder?  
 12. Was Lady Macbeth's motive ambition or wifely devotion?

## ACT II

13. Scene 1. To what does Banquo refer: "Restrain in me the cursed thoughts," etc.  
 14. How has Shakespeare contrasted Banquo and Macbeth?  
 15. Scene 2. Why does Lady Macbeth say she did not kill Duncan?  
 16. Why did Lady Macbeth, instead of Macbeth, take back the daggers?  
 17. Why do Malcolm and Donalbain flee?

## ACT III

18. Scene 1. What is the dramatic purpose of Banquo's soliloquy?  
 19. Has any change taken place in Macbeth since the murder of the King?  
 20. Does he hesitate about the murder of Banquo?  
 21. What is the effect on Macbeth of the appearance of Banquo's ghost?  
 22. Why does Macbeth determine to kill Macduff and his family?  
 23. Is there any reason for Malcolm's delivering such a tirade against himself?  
 24. How does Macduff receive the news of the killing of his family?

## ACT V

25. Scene 1. Describe Lady Macbeth's sleep walking.  
 26. Scene 5. How does Macbeth receive the news of Lady Macbeth's death?  
 27. Scene 8. What caused Macbeth to lose courage at the last?

28. Scene 8. How was the last part of the Weird Sisters' prophecy proved to Macbeth?

## GENERAL

29. Where is the crisis in this play? Why?  
 30. Where ends Lady Macbeth's part in the tragedy?

31. What makes this one of Shakespeare's famous plays?  
 32. This play is full of famous lines. Do you find any you would like to memorize?  
 33. Why are Macbeth, Hamlet, the Merchant of Venice, and Julius Caesar the best known plays?  
 34. Why are they now acted more often than the others?

## Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

## ACT I

1. Scene 1. How far do you read before you find your interests aroused?  
 2. How are the events of past months presented?  
 3. Is there a particular reason why the Ghost should reserve its information for Hamlet?  
 4. Enumerate the different ways in which the character of Hamlet is shown in this act.  
 5. Scene 3. What characteristics does Polonius display in his scene with Laertes?  
 6. Scene 4. Do you find yourself interested in this scene?  
 7. Why?  
 8. Scene 5. Has Hamlet sufficient reason for feigning madness?  
 9. Do you think he does?

## ACT II

10. Scene 1. By what devices is the character of Polonius further revealed?  
 11. Summarize all the scenes between Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.  
 12. Make a list of Hamlet's actions which help the impression that he is mad.  
 13. Trace the development of the idea of Hamlet to make use of the players.

## ACT III

14. Does this first scene show Hamlet's mental condition?  
 15. Does Hamlet know he is being observed?

16. If so when does he make the discovery?  
 17. What is your judgment of Ophelia at the end of Scene 1?  
 18. Is it natural that the play-scene should produce the effect it does upon the king?  
 19. Give your reasons.  
 20. Scene 4. Does Gertrude know that her first husband was murdered?  
 21. Make a list of the evidence on both sides.  
 22. Is the ghost in this scene real or the creation of Hamlet's mind?

## ACT IV

23. What effect does the death of Polonius have upon the king?  
 24. What lines through Ophelia's mad scenes are reminiscent of her love and grief?  
 25. Scene 5. Characterize the feelings of Laertes as shown in his scene with the king.  
 26. Does the effect of the king's suggestion on Laertes seem natural?

## ACT V

27. Scene 1. Does this comedy element seem out of place?  
 28. Why?  
 29. Do Laertes and Hamlet act naturally?  
 30. Does your interest remain at high pitch until the very end of the play?

GENERAL

- Contrast Hamlet with Laertes.
- What is the main theme of the tragedy?
- What is the most interesting scene in the play?
- What makes it so?
- What scene is second in point of interest?

- 36. Why has this play been produced so many times?
- 37. Gather all the evidence given in the play that Hamlet was mad.
- 38. Gather all the evidence in the play that he was not mad.
- 39. Are you attracted towards Ophelia?
- 40. What is your explanation of Hamlet's weakness of character?

King Lear

ACT I

- Scene 1. Is Lear's demand of an expression of love from each daughter likely to bring honest answers?
- How are we to account for Cordelia's answer?
- What is the character of Kent?
- Can you foresee, at the conclusion of this scene, anything of the course of the play?
- Scene 2. Does Gloucester's treatment of his two sons at all account for their attitude?
- Scenes 3, 4, 5. How far has Lear a just right to think himself ungratefully treated?
- What true friends has he, and how do they show their friendship?

ACT II

- Is Kent in any respects like Lear himself?
- Trace the growing cruelty of Regan and Goneril.

ACT III

- How has the kingdom prospered under Albany and Cornwall?
- What is the dramatic effect of the storm?
- Is Edgar really mad? If not, how do you account for his actions and words?

- 13. How is the King's mind affected?
- 14. By what steps has Gloucester been led to his betrayal?

ACT IV

- 15. What is the dramatic effect of the meeting of Gloucester and Edgar?
- 16. What is the effect on Goneril and her husband of the news of Gloucester's fate?
- 17. Describe the Dover Cliff incident.
- 18. Describe the restoration of Lear's sanity.
- 19. Why should not the play go on from this point to a happy ending?

ACT V

- 21. How does Albany learn of the treachery of his wife and Edmund?
- 22. Do you find any difference in character between Regan and Goneril?
- 23. Account for the fate of Cordelia.
- 24. What is the last impression you have of the old King?

GENERAL

- 25. In what form does Poetic Justice manifest itself in the cases of Lear and Gloucester?

**Othello, the Moor of Venice****ACT I**

1. Scene 1. What reason does Iago give for his hating Othello?
2. What motive is behind Roderigo's acts?
3. Scene 2. What characteristics does Othello show here?
4. Scene 3. What was the magic by which Othello won Desdemona?
5. Is Othello a negro?
6. What do you think of Iago's advice to Roderigo?

**ACT II**

7. Scene 1. In what ways does the villainy of Iago appear?
8. Scene 3. How does the brawl come about, and what is its consequence?

**ACT III**

9. Scene 3. By what steps does Iago suggest jealousy to Othello?
10. Is Othello too easily convinced?
11. Why is the handkerchief made so important?

**ACT IV**

12. Scene 1. Who is Bianca, and how is she used in Iago's plot?
13. What conflicting emotions is Othello a prey to on the arrival of Lodovico?
14. Scene 2. How does Desdemona bear herself throughout this scene?

15. What touches throughout this scene bring out the innocence of Desdemona?

**ACT V**

16. Scene 1. Explain Iago's reasons for bringing about the street-fight in which Roderigo attacks Cassio. Explain his reasons for his actions through the scene.
17. Scene 2. What is Othello's mood at the opening of the scene?
18. What does Desdemona say that enrages him?
19. What sort of character does Emilia show, in comparison with earlier scenes?
20. What lines of Othello most justly describe himself?
21. Do Othello and Desdemona suffer because of any faults or weaknesses of their own, or purely through the evil intent of others?

**GENERAL**

22. In this play Shakespeare portrays the passion of jealousy as developed in a wicked man and in a frank, good man. Make a comparative study of Iago and Othello from this viewpoint.
23. Macaulay said of this play: "Othello is, perhaps, the greatest work in the world." Do you agree with him? Why?
24. Can you discover the elements in the play which caused Macaulay to make this statement?

## Antony and Cleopatra

### ACT I

1. Scene 1. What does Philo think of Antony's love for Cleopatra?
2. Describe Cleopatra's beauty. Do you see her as light or dark?
3. Do you think of her as being exceedingly beautiful?
4. Scene 2. From this scene what are your conclusions concerning life at Cleopatra's court?
5. Does Antony realize the danger of his infatuation for Cleopatra?
6. From what you have seen of Cleopatra in Act I are you interested in her?
7. Why?

### ACT II

8. Contrast the spirit shown in the first four scenes of this act with those scenes of Act I which are laid in Egypt.
9. What is the difference?
10. Scene 2. How does Enobarbus conduct himself in this scene?
11. How do Marcellus and Agrippa show natural characteristics?
12. Scene 5. How do you interpret Cleopatra's actions upon the receipt of the news of Antony's marriage to Octavia?
13. Scene 6. What does Enobarbus think of Antony's marriage to Octavia?
14. Are you interested in Enobarbus? Why?
15. Scene 7. From this scene what is your judgment of Lepidus?

### ACT III

16. Scene 1. How does this scene show that the ancient military spirit has become degenerate?
17. Scenes 2 and 4. What is Antony's attitude toward his wife?
18. Contrast these scenes with several in which Antony is seen with Cleopatra.
19. Scene 5. Are you surprised by the gossip of this scene?
20. Why?
21. Scene 7. Does Cleopatra help or hinder Antony?

22. Scenes 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Why are so many short scenes given?
23. On what grounds can you explain Antony's flight?
24. Scene 11. What are Cleopatra's pleas for her part in the disaster?
25. Scene 13. Read carefully all the speeches of Enobarbus.
26. What do you think of them? Of Enobarbus?

### ACT IV

27. Scene 3. Why was this scene introduced?
28. Scene 5. What are Antony's emotions in this scene?
29. Scenes 7 and 8. What is the dramatic effect of these two scenes?
30. Scene 9. What drives Enobarbus to his death?
31. Scene 12. Why does Antony turn against Cleopatra?
32. Scene 14. Does Antony (lines 35 to 140) act as you would expect him to?
33. Scene 15. What lines appeal to you? Why?

### ACT V

34. Scene 1. What were Caesar's feelings toward Antony?
35. Scene 2. What is the best speech in this scene?
36. Why do the women about Cleopatra die?

### GENERAL

37. What are your feelings toward Antony and Cleopatra?
38. Do you blame them? Why?
39. From what you read of Octavia should Antony be severely censured for his return to Cleopatra?
40. If you look upon the love of Antony and Cleopatra with indulgence, what is the reason?
41. What purpose does Enobarbus serve throughout the play?
42. What great speeches do you find in the play?

**Cymbeline****ACT I**

1. Scene 1. What purpose does this scene serve?
2. Is there anything repulsive in this act?

**ACT II**

3. Scene 2. What qualities do you find in lines 11 to 51?
4. What are your feelings?
5. Scene 4. Are you impatient with Posthumus? Why?

**ACT III**

6. Scene 1. What purpose does this scene serve?
7. Scene 4. What is your opinion of Imogen after reading this scene?
8. Scene 5. Why does the Queen desire Imogene's ruin?

**ACT IV**

9. Scene 2. Are you satisfied with the action in this scene?
10. Why?
11. Scene 3. What is the condition of affairs at court?

**ACT V**

12. Scene 1. What are the feelings of Posthumus towards Imogen?
13. Scene 4. Do you pity Posthumus? Why?
14. Scene 5. How does this scene add to your knowledge of the beauty of Imogen's character?
15. Did Iachimo deceive Posthumus for gain?
16. Why?
17. What influence do the young princes have in this scene?
18. Is the end of the play appropriate?
19. Whom do you regard as the central figure in the play?

**GENERAL**

20. What do you think of the wager of the first act?
21. Could such a wager be used in a modern play.
22. Compare Iachimo with other of Shakespeare's villains.

**Pericles**

1. Do the prologues in this play serve the same purpose that they do in the other plays?

**ACT I**

2. Does the material presented in this act seem suitable for a play?
3. What opinions do you have of the social life of the 17th century from the fact that this was a popular play of the period?

**ACT II**

4. At what point is your interest greatest in this act?

**ACT III**

5. Scene 1. Compare this first speech of Pericles with his first speech in Act II, scene 1. Is he in a different frame of mind? Explain.

**ACT IV**

6. What time elapses between this and Act III?
7. What are the important events of this act?

**ACT V**

8. Scene 1. In what frame of mind is Pericles at the beginning of this scene?
9. Through what character is the supremacy of good brought out in this play?

**GENERAL**

10. Is this an easy play to read? Why?
11. What moral qualities are emphasized?
12. Cite instances which prove Pericles is a man of strength and of weakness.
13. How does Shakespeare secure the unity which the desultory nature of this play required?

## POEMS

1. Which poem do you like best?
2. Do you place it first because of the story or for some other reason?
3. In reading these poems should you try to find moral lessons?
4. What should a reader try to get from poetry?
5. What is the general theme of the sonnets?
6. What is a sonnet? In what ways is it different from other forms of verse?
7. Which sonnets do you like best? Why?
8. Do you find *beauty* in these poems?
9. Is it beauty of thought or is it in the way the thought is expressed?
10. Do you enjoy reading poetry? Why?





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